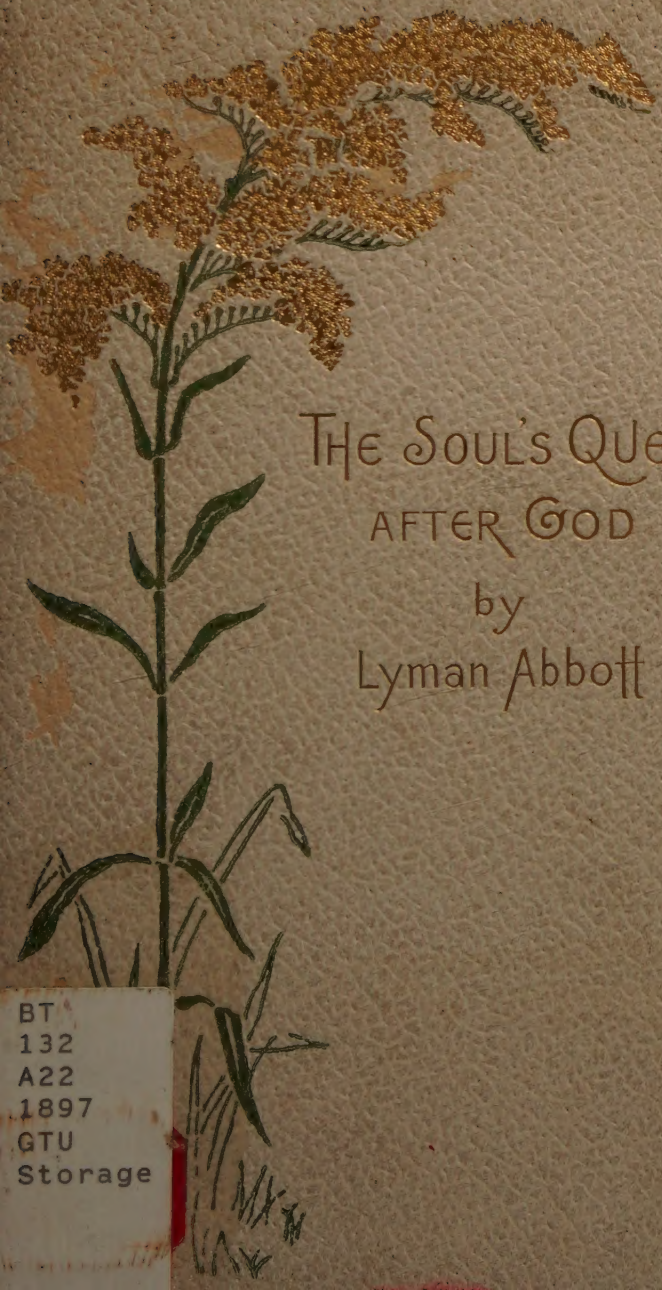

The Soul's Quest after God

by

Lyman Abbott

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THE

SOUL'S QUEST AFTER GOD

BY

LYMAN ABBOTT

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THE SOUL'S QUEST AFTER GOD.

18 Dec. 1914 - Mrs. Simpson

The experience of personal communion with God is as universal as the human race. Appreciation of the divine presence is more common than appreciation of art, music, or literature. Men and women who do not respond to music, see no beauty in pictures, never read, and could not understand literature if it were read to them, yet find comfort in sorrow, strength in temptation, courage in danger, and added joy in their enjoyments, from the sense of a Father's presence. In all climates and countries, among all races and in all epochs, under all creeds and theologies, this experience of communion with the Eternal is seen. He is addressed by many names, many and inconsistent conceptions of him are formed; the language is sometimes that of dread, sometimes that of reverence, sometimes that of hope and trust and love. But whatever the language, whatever the phase of experience, faith in the reality of the fellowship inspires the prayer. To believe that there is no fellowship is to disbelieve in the trustworthiness of a substantially universal though multiform human con-

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sciousness. To deny the reality of such fellowship is to deny the common witness of mankind in all ages and of all types.

This little book assumes the trustworthiness of universal human experience. It assumes that God is, and that some men have communion with him. It is addressed to those who believe, or wish to believe, in God, who believe, or wish to believe, that the soul of man can have communion with him, but who either have no such communion themselves, or in whose experience it is so broken, interrupted, and desultory, as to leave them a prey to doubts whether it is a reality or a fantasy. This book is not written to prove either that God is, or that the soul can hold communion with him. It is written to aid those who see, and desire to see more clearly; or who have seen, and desire to renew their sight; or who have heard the testimony of those who see, and wish to believe that testimony true, and to enjoy a similar vision. It assumes in the reader a desire to know God, or to know him better; a desire like that of Abraham when he followed a mystic voice which called him out of the land of idolatry to find God in a strange land he knew nothing of; like that of Moses when in the wilderness he cried out, "I beseech thee, show me thy glory;" like that of Job when in his darkness, tortured by the injustice of his friends, the unfaith of his wife, and his own doubts, he cried out, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even

to his seat;" like that of Elijah when in despair he looked upon the fire, tempest, and earthquake at Mount Horeb, and so was prepared to hear the still, small voice within; like that of Philip saying to the Master, "Show us the Father, and it sufficeth us;" like that of the Athenians erecting an altar to the unknown God, because all idols, temples, and priests had failed to satisfy their quest; like that of Paul when life and death, principalities and powers, things present and things to come, had vainly endeavored to turn him aside, and who in his finding of God's love declared himself victor over them all. For such, by one who seeks to clarify and confirm his own faith as well as that of others, this book is written to point out, first, some of the hindrances to be overcome; second, some of the aids which promote success in the soul's quest after God.

I. HINDRANCES.

If the consciousness of God is possible to all healthful souls, why are so many men and women without this consciousness? There are men and women, not a few, who do not want God. They would be very glad to have God if he were always on their side; glad to have God if he would always do what they want him to do. But a supreme will, a masterful will, a will to which they must conform, they do not want. They do not like to retain God in their knowledge, says Paul; they put

God far from them, says the Psalmist. The same spirit of anarchism which leads some men to desire to be rid of human law leads other men to desire to be rid of divine law. Not long ago a body of anarchists in Chicago passed a resolution saying in effect, and very nearly in words, "We have no use for God." So Bakunin, the Russian anarchist, says substantially, "We want no laws, either human or divine." The first question of the soul, then, must be this, Do I really want God to rule over me? Do I want a supreme will in the universe, to which my will must in every respect be conformed? Do I want a will superior to my own, in the shop, in the factory, in society, at the ballot-box, in the home?

There are many men, and a larger number, who, though they do not wish to be rid of God, do not very much care to have him. They are not opposed to God; but neither are they anxious about knowing him. The Psalmist speaks of these when he says, "God is not in all their thoughts." There are thousands of men and women of whom that is true. They live their lives without thought of God. Sometimes God is forced into their thoughts by his providence; sometimes he is flashed before their thoughts by a sermon or a book; but, for the most part, they are living with thoughts fixed on other things. The kingdom they are working for is not the kingdom of God; the name they are hallowing is not the name of God; the will they are trying

to do is not the will of God. They are busy about other things. One man is busy after his wealth — he is a honey-gatherer; another after his pleasure; another after his fame; another about nothing — and he is busiest of all. But neither is taken up with God. They do not know what is the meaning of the experience, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God." They are not eager to know God; they are not anxious to be friends with him. They lie awake at night over business anxieties, over earthly disappointments, over the sundering of human friendships; but they never lie awake at night over the absence of God. That ploughs no furrow on the brow, traces no line in the cheek, brings no gray hair to the head. On the whole, they are well satisfied without God.

Nor are these men all sensual self-seekers. Some of them are what we call good men, followers after truth, practisers of righteousness. But the invisible and the eternal world does not attract them; their thoughts do not run in that direction. The spiritual vision may be lost by non-use, as any other faculty may be lost. They who have not looked for anything back of phenomena, who have only been searching the phenomena, and ticketing and classifying them, will find only what they look for. Such men sometimes feel the sadness and the loneliness of a Godless life; sometimes the question arises in their hearts whether it is worth while to know the

stars, the flowers, the rocks, the trees, the bones, the arteries, if there is no Spirit behind them all, no God in them all, no love using them all. Says one of these men, Professor Clifford of England: —

"It cannot be doubted that theistic belief is a comfort and a solace to those who hold it, and that the loss of it is a very painful loss. It cannot be doubted, at least, by many of us in this generation, who either profess it now, or received it in our childhood, and have parted from it since with such searching trouble as only cradle-faiths can cause. We have seen the spring sun shine out of an empty heaven, to light up a soulless earth; we have felt with utter loneliness that the Great Companion is dead. Our children, it may be hoped, will know that sorrow only by the reflex light of a wondering compassion."[1]

Heartrending is this testimony of a truly noble, genuine, pure-minded man to the loss of the capacity to perceive the Infinite in the finite, the Divine behind the human, the Invisible behind the visible.

Sometimes this voluntary blindness, this having eyes and seeing not, and having ears and hearing not, is formulated into a philosophy. The man who has lost the power of vision declares that there is no vision; the man who has lost the power of hearing declares that there is no hearing; the man whose heart does not throb to the pulsation of music says that there is no music;

[1] W. K. Clifford's Lectures and Essays, p. 389.

the man whose eyes see no beauty in a picture declares there is no art; the man who has lost, from non-use, the capacity to perceive and recognize the Divine and the Infinite declares that there is not in man the capacity to perceive the Divine and the Infinite. "Truly," says Mr. Huxley, speaking of religious faith, "on this topic silence is golden; while speech reaches not even the dignity of sounding brass or tinkling cymbal, and is but the weary clatter of an endless logomachy." [1] That is the philosophy of non-use of faculty coined into a system. The adequate answer to it is furnished by Victor Hugo: —

"There is, we are aware, a philosophy that denies the infinite. There is also a philosophy, classed pathologically, which denies the sun; this philosophy is called blindness. To set up a sense we lack as a source of truth, is a fine piece of blind man's assurance. And the rarity of it consists in the haughty air of superiority and compassion which is assumed towards the philosophy that sees God, by this philosophy that has to grope its way. It makes one think of a mole exclaiming: 'How they excite my pity with their prate about a sun!'" [2]

This loss of vision from non-use, this atrophy of the

[1] Essay on Hume, p. 183.

[2] *Les Misérables*, "Cosette," p. 133. — Victor Hugo. Curiously, Mr. Huxley uses the same simile, though he applies it only to men who do not see ethical laws, not to men who do not see the invisible spirit in nature or in man. See his *Hume*, p. 239, 240.

spiritual faculty, is a very common hindrance to the perception of God in our materialistic and scientific age. For the man who does not want God of course will not find him; and the man who is busy searching for something else will not find God; and certainly the man who has coined the atrophy of faculty into a philosophy that the Eternal and the Invisible cannot be seen or known, cannot see or know.

Besides these, are many men who believe that there is a God, and yet live without any companionship with God, because they have taken in place of God what is divinely intended only to bring them to him. We think that we have gotten rid of idolatry because we no longer worship painted or carved images, as though these were the only idols. Men at first use a symbol as a means of enabling them to apprehend the reality, and then stop with the symbol, and accept it in lieu of the reality. The image is put up as a means of interpreting God to men; then men content themselves with the image, and leave God unknown. Is there nothing analogous to that in Christian experience? In the same way, one generation has constructed a creed, and another generation has substituted belief in the creed for a living faith in a living God. Belief in the Apostles' Creed, in the Nicene Creed, in the Westminster Confession of Faith, in the Thirty-Nine Articles, has taken the place of faith in God and in his Son Jesus Christ. Other men have gone behind the creed, and said, "We believe in the

church which made the creed;" or behind the church to the Bible, and said, "We are not sure whether we believe in the creed, we are not quite sure whether we believe in the church; but one thing we do know, we believe in" — what? God? No — "we believe in the Bible;" and they stop there. Some men are content with the creed; other men are content with the church; other men are content with the Book. But in either case they stop at the eidolon, — the image, the symbol. So long as the creed is a window, and we see God through it, it is good; so long as the church is a voice, and we hear it saying, "Come to God," it is good; so long as the Bible is a collection of voices, every one saying, "God tabernacles among men," and we look in our own heart and find God there, it is good. But when men are content simply to believe in the creed, or in the church, or in the Bible, they are worshipping idols. It is not the Bible, it is not the church, it is not the creed; it is God — the living God, who spake in the hearts of men of olden time. Why? In order that we might hear the same voice speaking in our hearts to-day. But when men stop with the eidolon, God slips out of their thought. Gideon destroys the idol that has been erected to the worship of Baal, and puts up an altar without any idol, that he may worship the spirit of Jehovah. The people think him irreligious, and would at first kill him. It has always been so. This process of idol destruction has gone on in all ages of the world, and will go on until God has

call God to an account for the way in which he conducts himself, still fail to find God because they want God only for what God will bring to them. This is the most common cause of failing to find God in the spiritual experience of men and women. They do not want God for himself. They want him for something he is going to bring them. "I want peace," one cries, "and so I want God." "I want prosperity," another cries, "and so I want God." "I want joy," cries another, "and therefore I want God." What man can find his way to the heart of a woman if he wants her for the fortune she will bring? Whether it be fortune of houses and lots, or fortune of pleasures and joys, if all his love for her is only the reflex of love for himself, he will never find her. She may marry him; he may have her for a wife; but he will never know her. So God will be loved for his own sake. The fortune-hunter never finds him. We think we want God. Do we? If God brings tears, humiliation, poverty, do we want him? Or do we want peace and joy and prosperity? Our question must be, not, Can I have God's help in my business, but, Can God have my help in his business? Not whether we can get God on our side, but whether we are willing to be on God's side. Do we want God for his own sake? It is true that wisdom has wealth in the one hand and pleasure in the other, that her ways are ways of pleasantness, her paths are paths of peace; but she will never come to one who follows her for the sake of the

wealth in the one hand or the pleasure in the other. No man will find God unless he seeks after God for God's own sake, loves him for himself, and not for the gifts which he may bestow.

Devout seekers after God are not infrequently separated from him by sorrow. It is said that sorrow brings one to God. So it sometimes does. But it sometimes estranges from God. Great sorrow often makes it seem for the time as though life were unjust, and there were no God ruling in the universe. This is a very common experience. It was the experience of Job in his distress, of the Psalmist in his exile, of Paul in his struggle with life and death, and principalities and powers, and things present and things to come. It was in the experience of the Master himself when he cried, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" If when we look out upon life and see its travail of pain, or when the anguish of life enters our own soul and embitters it, the sun sometimes seems blotted out of the heavens, and God seems gone, we are not to chide ourselves; we are to remember that our experience of temporary oblivion of the Almighty is an experience which the devout in all ages have known. Wait thou his time. Blessed is he who in such an hour of sorrow, when it seems as though God were departing, still holds to him, and cries, "*My* God! *my* God!"

Finally, God is infinite and we are finite; and, at the best, we can only know him a very little. Many young

people make a mistake in this respect. They read the story of devout souls in the Psalms, or in biographies in the Bible or in other literature, and say, "I have no such experience as that; I cannot be a Christian." It takes time to grow, and the power of seeing God is a power that must grow like any other power. We cannot expect at fifteen all that we may have at fifty; nor at fifty all that we may have in the glory of the future. One of the best educated, one of the most spiritually developed, one of the richest natures that God has ever given to the world, said of himself, "We see in part, and we prophesy in part," and "we see in a glass darkly." If you do not care for God, if you think you can get along without him, if you are satisfied to live as you are, then you may very well question whether you are living at all. If you think you have all of God you need, if you are satisfied with your vision of God, if you have all the experience that your heart craves, then you may doubt whether you are really living. But if you know what it is to cry, "As the hart panteth after the water brooks, so my soul panteth after thee, O God!" if you know what it is to cry, "Oh, that I knew where I might find him!" if every glimpse of God makes you long for a better vision, and every imperfect and tardy acquiescence in God's will makes you long for the time when you will do his will on earth as the angels do it in heaven, — "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled." I cannot

take all the sunlight; but shall I not bask in what sunlight I can get on a spring morning? I cannot breathe all the oxygen; but shall I not stand at the open window, and take great draughts of oxygen, as much as my lungs will hold? I cannot see all the floral beauty of this beautiful world; but shall I not look at this bunch of lilies, and enjoy them? I cannot take in all of God; shall I not walk in such light as he gives, breathe in such breath of life as he imparts, rejoice in such beauty of love as he affords?

Look at these etchings as they stand, my reader, and ask yourself the question, Is your portrait here? Do you really want God? or would you rather be glad to know there is no will superior to your own? Do you want him above everything else, so that no wealth, nor power, nor fame counts in comparison with the desire for God? Do you want God, and not an intellectual opinion about him, or a testimony to him, or a church service of adoration of him, or even a Book written concerning him? Do you want God for his own sake, and not for the happiness you think he will bring to you either here or hereafter? Do you want him as your comforter in sorrow, your strength in temptation, your guide in perplexity, your life, your all and in all? If you do not, the second part of this little book is not for you. If you do, then will I try to tell you, as well as a half-healed blind man can tell other half-healed blind men, how we can see something of God.

II. HELPS.

We can form the habit of looking for God in nature.

It is only a very superficial acquaintance with scientific thought which leads to the idea that there is no God in nature. The old argument from designs has given place to the modern argument from design. The evidence of personal skill in nature is by no man more strikingly witnessed to than by such representatives of modern scientific exploration as Darwin, Tyndall, and Huxley. Read in Darwin's *Life and Letters* his recognition of infinite design in the great fabric of creation; or Huxley's wonderfully graphic description in his essay on "The Origin of the Species"[1] of the development of some common animal such as a salamander or a newt from its egg, and his conclusion: "After watching the process hour by hour, one is almost involuntarily possessed by the notion, that some more subtle aid to vision than an achromatic would show the hidden artist, with his plan before him, striving with skilful manipulation to perfect his work." Or read Professor Tyndall's[2] testimony to his own experience: "I have noticed during years of self-observation that it is not in hours of clearness and vigor that this doctrine [of material atheism] commends itself to my mind; that in the presence of stronger and healthier thought it ever

[1] *Lay Sermons, Addresses, and Reviews*, p. 260.

[2] *Fragments of Science*, vol. ii. p. 204.

dissolves and disappears, as offering no solution of the mystery in which we dwell, and of which we form a part." He who does not care to find God will not have God forced upon his attention by nature. But he who does, may learn to discern the infinite wisdom manifesting itself in all natural phenomena. "There are," says James Martineau,[1] "but three forms under which it is possible to think of the ultimate or immanent principle of the universe, — Mind, Life, Matter: given the first, it is intellectually thought out: the second, it blindly grows: the third, it mechanically shuffles into equilibrium." Whatever intellectual, or even moral, difficulties one may find involved in a theistic conception of the universe, however unsatisfactory the old mechanical conception of creation, and the old semi-idolatrous conception of God as a gigantic man, fulfilling the part now of mechanic and now of engineer, no thoughtful student of nature can hesitate between these alternatives: it is clear that nature has been thought out. The object of science is, or ought to be, not merely to describe phenomena, and to label and assort them, but to perceive their intellectual relations; and that is to perceive the Infinite Intellect which has prearranged them, and is revealed in and by them. Science thinks the thoughts of God after him. It is possible to form the habit of looking for evidences of wisdom, skill, æsthetic love of beauty, general beneficence in the ordered phenomena

[1] *A Study of Religion*, vol. i., p. 336.

of nature. One will see what he looks for. In the same field the farmer will see food for cattle; the artist flowers for his canvas; the scientist mechanical contrivances for his analytical dissection; the devout soul witnesses of a life greater, wiser, better than his own. He may cultivate the habit of the Hebrew Psalmist. If he does, what he will learn in time to see and hear in nature will be what that Psalmist saw and heard: —

"The voice of the Lord is upon the waters:
The God of glory thundereth,
Even the Lord upon many waters.
The voice of the Lord is powerful;
The voice of the Lord is full of majesty.
The voice of the Lord breaketh the cedars;
Yea, the Lord breaketh in pieces the cedars of Lebanon.
He maketh them also to skip like a calf;
Lebanon and Sirion like a young wild-ox.
The voice of the Lord cleaveth the flames of fire.
The voice of the Lord shaketh the wilderness;
The Lord shaketh the wilderness of Kadesh.
The voice of the Lord maketh the hinds to calve,
And strippeth the forests bare:
And in his temple everything saith, Glory."

We may form a similar habit of looking for God in man. "He," says John, "that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" This would be a strange *non sequitur*, if God were not to be seen in men. There is a divine in humanity, obscured, alloyed, corrupted; but still it is there. For where love is, there God is; and in all the revelations of love there is a revelation of God, who is

himself the fountain of love. To this, Browning has given beautiful expression, though his enigmatic verse will not yield its meaning to the mere careless reader: —

"Round us the wild creatures, overhead the trees,
Underfoot the moss-tracks, — life and love with these!
I to wear a fawn-skin, thou to dress in flowers:
All the long lone summer day, that greenwood life of ours!

Rich-pavilioned, rather, — still the world without, —
Inside — gold-roofed silk-walled silence round about!
Queen it thou on purple, — I, at watch and ward
Couched beneath the columns, gaze, thy slave, love's guard!

So, for us no world? Let throngs press thee to me!
Up and down amid men, heart by heart fare we!
Welcome squalid vesture, harsh voice, hateful face!
God is soul, souls I and thou: with souls should souls have place."

Optimism and piety walk the world together. This is but another way of saying that hope and faith are kin. If to be without God is to be without hope, it is scarcely less true, to be without hope is to be without God. He who looks for the worst in men will not be without belief in a personal devil; he who looks for the best in men will not be without faith in a personal God. A wealthy lady, who had a beautiful rural home in the vicinity of one of our great cities, invited to it one day the outcast of the neighboring city. They roamed her lawns, visited her conservatory, swarmed through her gardens. At parting, a rough, raw-boned Irishwoman said to her, in a voice which for depth, but not for smoothness, would have done credit to a basso, "Mrs.

——, I guess the Lord Jesus put this into your head, didn't he?" — "I think he did," was the reply. "I thought so," was the unconsciously humorous response; "I knew you couldn't have thought of it yourself." But humorous though it was, it expressed a profound truth. The higher thoughts come to us and to our fellows. He who will look in life for its heroisms, its self-denials, its unselfish services, will find faith in a personal God stealing into his heart, he scarce knows how. He will find himself saying to himself, all unconsciously, "God put this into your heart; you couldn't have thought of it yourself."

In this quest after God, whether in the world of nature or the world of men, most of us need, as in other quests after knowledge, a guide, a teacher. Few men know how to see accurately material things, fewer still how to perceive spiritual realities, until they have been shown. There are men who have developed with patient assiduity the capacity to examine the outer world, for whose guidance we should be profoundly grateful, — Tyndall, Huxley, Darwin, Agassiz, and hosts of others. There are other men who have developed the gift of seeing the invisible world; and when we cannot see with our less-developed vision, why should we not accept their witness, and under their guidance learn to see as they see? The testimony of the scientists to life is not to be discarded; but neither is the testimony of the poets. Imagination is also a capacity to see; and the

poet is also an explorer. Wordsworth will tell us how to see God in nature; and Browning how to see God in men; and Whittier how to see God in our own souls. There is in the autobiography of Charles Darwin a pathetic passage in which, with characteristic candor, he laments the atrophy of his own imagination and his spiritual nature, and accounts for it. He says:[1] —

"Up to the age of thirty, or beyond it, poetry of many kinds, such as the works of Milton, Gray, Byron, Wordsworth, Coleridge, and Shelley, gave me great pleasure; and even as a schoolboy I took intense delight in Shakespeare, especially in the historical plays. I have also said that formerly pictures gave me considerable, and music very great, delight. But now for many years I cannot endure to read a line of poetry; I have tried lately to read Shakespeare, and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have also almost lost my taste for pictures and music. . . . My mind seems to have become a kind of machine for grinding general laws out of large collections of facts; but why this should have caused the atrophy of that part of the brain alone on which the higher tastes depend, I cannot conceive. A man with a mind more highly organized or better constituted than mine, would not, I suppose, have thus suffered; and if I had to live my life again, I would have made a rule to read some poetry, and listen to some music, at least once every week; for perhaps the parts of

[1] *Life and Letters of Charles Darwin*, vol. i., pp. 81, 82.

my brain now atrophied would thus have been kept active through use. The loss of these tastes is a loss of happiness, and may possibly be injurious to the intellect, and more probably to the moral character, by enfeebling the emotional part of our nature."

He who would see God must use the faculty with which God is seen; and if he would do this, he must let men who are rich in the faculty which perceives the invisible, — which looks not at the things which are seen and are temporal, but at the things which are not seen and are eternal, — guide, teach, inspire him. Paul has given this counsel in four sentences, which are not the disconnected aphorisms they are sometimes taken to be: "Quench not the spirit; despise not prophesyings; prove all things; hold fast that which is good!" Which may be liberally rendered thus: Do not extinguish the spiritual nature within you, by suffering that part of your powers to be atrophied. Despise not the men who live in the invisible world, and bear testimony out of their experience to the things which they have seen and known. Yet take not all utterances of all prophets as of equal authority; test them. And such as prove in the trial beneficent, by animating human life, and making it nobler and better, to those hold fast; that is the test, — by their fruits ye shall know them.

In this quest after God in human life we must, as I have said, seek for the divine in the human; for the gold in the ore; for the flowers among the weeds. But there

is one life in which that divine was not corrupted by the human, though dwelling in it. It would be foreign to the purpose of this book to attempt to afford a theological definition of Jesus Christ. One may believe that he was God and man dwelling together in a dual personality; or God in human flesh, the divine spirit dwelling under the limitations of bodily existence; or God-in-man, the divine Spirit so animating the man Christ Jesus as to make him a God-filled man; or one may decline to define his faith, believing that Christ transcends all definition. But he can hardly read with unprejudiced mind the story of that wonderful life, and not find in it a marvellous revelation of the nature of God. He who would find God will find him, as nowhere else, in the earthly life of Jesus the Christ. Let him for the purpose read and re-read the story of that life, and think that the Father is, in the infinite and eternal relations, what Jesus Christ was in the temporary and limited ones. Would he know how God feels toward us in our sorrow, let him read the story of Christ's visit to the sisters of Lazarus; toward the sceptic in his unbelief, let him read the story of Jesus and Thomas; toward the recreant disciple who has been unfaithful, let him read the interview between Christ and Peter by the Galilean Sea; toward the penitent sinner, outcast and despairing, let him read the story of Christ's pardon of the woman who was a sinner; toward the men who use religion as a cloak for self-service, let him read Christ's denuncia-

tion of the Pharisees who devoured widows' houses, and for a pretence made long prayers. And then before a God thus interpreted, let him come in his sorrow for comfort; in his doubts for better, clearer light; in his penitence for pardon; in his despair for a new courage; and in his pride for condemnation. In doing this we may take either one of the many figures by which the New Testament writers interpret Christ to us. We may think of him as the Christ of God, — that is, as the One whom God has anointed and sent into the world to reveal the unknown and make Him known; or as the Son of God, — that is, as One who possesses the Father's nature, and so discloses it to us that we may become sons of God; or as the Image of God, — that is, a picture of the Invisible and the Eternal cast upon the sensitive-plate of a pure and holy life; or, laying aside all figures, we may simply accept Christ's words, and build upon them, "Believe that I am in the Father, and the Father in me." The one thing important for him who is seeking God is to seek to find him in Jesus Christ, as he has sought to find him in nature, in humanity, and in the experience of the prophetic and devout souls portrayed in literature. He who thus seeks will find him in Jesus Christ, with a clearness of disclosure found nowhere else.

But he must look for God in Christ not only by reading about Christ, but by endeavoring to be like him. It is only by participation in his life that we can come to

an acquaintance with him. Not so much by studying the life of Christ as by endeavoring to live it, do we come into fellowship with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ. If it is true that we shall be like him when we see him as he is, it is also true that we can see him as he is, only as we are like him. There is one utterance of Paul in which the two different translations, that of the Old Version and that of the Revised Version, bring out this distinction very clearly: —

Old Version. — We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory.

Revised Version. — We all, with unveiled face reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory.

It is not by beholding as in a glass, it is by reflecting as from a mirror, that the transformation comes; and with the transformation, acquaintance friendship.

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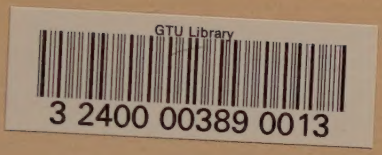

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